

The listing of claims presented below replaces all prior versions and listing of claims in the application.

Listing of claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A double-stranded RNA molecule capable of suppressing the expression of a target gene in a cell by RNAi, which is improved as compared to ~~based on~~ a conventional siRNA consisting of completely complementary sense and antisense strands such that [[only]] one or more [[consecutive]] nucleotides in order from the 3' end of the sense strand of ~~at the ends of~~ the double-stranded part, ~~only one nucleotide at around the center of the double-stranded part or both~~ in said RNA molecule are not complementary to the antisense strand,

wherein the sense strand of the double-stranded part has adequate number of nucleotides which are complementary to the antisense strand for enabling the hybridization of both strands in said cell and

wherein only one or more nucleotides at the 3' end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part, and only one nucleotide located at position 11-13 from the 3' end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part are not complementary to the antisense strand.

2. (Original) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 1, wherein the number of the nucleotides which are not complementary to the antisense strand in order from the 3'-end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part is 1 to 4.

3. (Original) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 1, wherein the number of the nucleotides which are not complementary to the antisense strand in order from the 3'-end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part is 2.

4. (Currently amended) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 1, which is designed such that [[the]] one additional nucleotide located ~~at around the center is located at any one of positions~~ position 11-13 from the 3'-end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part is not complementary to the antisense strand.

5. (Original) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 4, which is

designed such that a nucleotide located at position 12 from the 3'-end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part is not complementary to the antisense strand.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Original) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 1, which does not induce double-stranded RNA-dependent protein kinase or 2',5'-oligoadenylate synthetase in a mammalian cell.

10. (Currently amended) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 9, which wherein each strand has a strand length of 29 or less nucleotides.

11. (Currently Amended) A double-stranded RNA molecule capable of suppressing the expression of a target gene in a cell by RNAi, which is improved as compared to [[based on]] a conventional siRNA consisting of completely complementary sense and antisense strands such that [[only]] one or more [[consecutive]] nucleotides in order from the 5'-end of sense strand of at the ends of the double-stranded part, only one residue at around the center of the double-stranded part or both in said RNA molecule are not complementary to the antisense strand,

wherein the sense strand of the double-stranded part has adequate number of nucleotides which are complementary to the antisense strand for enabling the hybridization of both strands in said cell, and

wherein only one or more nucleotides at the 5' end and the 3' end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part, and only one nucleotide located at position 11-13 from the 3' end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part are not complementary to the antisense strand.

12. (Original) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 11, wherein the number of the nucleotides which are not complementary to the antisense strand in order from the 5'-end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part is 1 to 4.

13. (Original) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 11, wherein the number of the nucleotides which are not complementary to the antisense strand in order from the 5'-end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part is 2.

14. (Original) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 11, which is designed such that one or more additional nucleotides in order from the 3'-end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part are not complementary to the antisense strand.

15. (Original) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 14, wherein the number of the nucleotides which are not complementary to the antisense strand in order from the 3'-end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part is 1 to 4.

16. (Original) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 14, wherein the number of the nucleotides which are not complementary to the antisense strand in order from the 3'-end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part is 2.

17. (Currently amended) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 11, which is designed such that [[one]] one additional nucleotide located at position 11-13 from the 3'-end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part is not complementary to the antisense strand.

18. (Original) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 17, which is designed such that a nucleotide located at position 12 from the 3'-end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part is not complementary to the antisense strand.

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Original) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 11, which does not induce double-stranded RNA-dependent protein kinase or 2',5'-oligoadenylate synthetase in a mammalian cell.

23. (Previously Presented) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 22, which each strand has a strand length of 29 or less nucleotides.

24. (Withdrawn) A method for suppressing the expression of a target gene in a cell, comprising a step of introducing the double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 1 into the cell.

25. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 24, wherein the cell is a mammalian cell.

26. (Previously Presented) A vector comprising both of a DNA encoding the sense strand of the double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 1 and a DNA encoding the antisense strand of said RNA molecule.

27. (Withdrawn) A method for suppressing the expression of a target gene in a cell, comprising a step of introducing a combination of a vector containing a DNA encoding the sense strand of the double-stranded RNA molecule capable of suppressing the expression of a target gene in a cell by RNAi, which is designed such that one or more nucleotides in order from the 3'-end of the sense strand of double-stranded part in said RNA molecule are not complementary to the antisense strand, wherein the sense strand of the double-stranded part has adequate number of nucleotides which are complementary to the antisense strand for enabling the hybridization of both strands in said cell and a vector containing a DNA encoding the antisense strand of said RNA molecule, or a vector according to claim 26, into the cell.

28. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27, wherein the cell is a mammalian cell.

29. (Cancelled)

30. (Cancelled)